

Message Text

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P R 011300Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 103

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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USIA WASHDC

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CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 5857

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB
SUBJECT: KHMER REPORT -- APRIL 1, 1975

GENERAL

1. PRESIDENT LON NOL LEFT CAMBODIA FOR INDONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES APRIL 1. FORMER CHIEF OF STATE CHENG HENG, ALSO ON GRUNK/FUNK'S LIST OF SEVEN CONDEMNED TRAITORS, LEFT FOR FRANCE LATE LAST WEEK. SENATE PRESIDENT LTG SAUKHAM KHOY IS ACTING CHIEF OF STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION. SIHANOUK HAS DENOUNCED HIM AND REITERATED GRUNK/FUNK'S DETERMINATION TO FIGHT ON TO VICTORY. THE PRINCE ALSO SET FORTH A 21-NAME LIST (INCLUDING SAUKHAM KHOY) OF WAR CRIMINALS SUBJECT TO PROSECUTION AFTER LIBERATION. THE MOVE EVIDENTLY TOOK THE KC BY SURPRISE BECAUSE THEY REAFFIRMED THEIR AMNESTY FOR ALL BUT THE TRAITOROUS SEVEN IN A COMMUNIQUE OF THE SAME DATE. MILITARY NEWS FROM NEAK LUONG ON THE MEKONG IS SOMBRE. IF THE TOWN FALLS THE KC WILL PRESUMABLY MOVE FORCES NORTH AND SHARPLY INCREASED PRESSURE ON THE HITERTO RELATIVELY QUIET AREA SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST OF THE CAPITAL. FANK HAS RECENTLY GIVEN UP GROUND WITH LITTLE CONFIDENTIAL

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RESISTANCE IN THIS AREA. THE KC AGAIN FAILED TO EXPLOIT A GAP THEY PUNCHED IN FANK LINES NORTHWEST OF THE AIRPORT AND THE GKR HAS MANAGED TO REDUCE THE HOLE. DESPITE A HEAVY FALL OF 107MM ROCKETS THE RICE AIRLIFT CONTINUED WITH A RECORD NUMBER OF DC-8 SORTIES MAKING UP FOR THE TWO DAYS OF NO OPERATIONS LAST WEEK.

POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. PRESIDENT LON NOL, HIS FAMILY AND A LARGE ENTOURAGE LEFT CAMBODIA APRIL 1. THE MARSHAL'S DEPARTURE RESULTED FROM A LONG INTERNAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM THE KHMER REPUBLIC'S ASIAN ALLIES. THE KHMER AND FOREIGN CONSENSUS CONVINCED THE MARSHAL THAT HE SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE COUNTRY IN THE INTEREST OF GETTING PEACE TALKS STARTED. LON NOL WILL GO TO INDONESIA FIRST AND THEN TO THE UNITED STATES FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT. GENERAL SAUKHAM KHOY, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, WILL ACT AS CHIEF OF STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION. (SEE GRUNK/FUNK FOR REACTION). PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET WILL ACCOMPANY THE MARSHAL AS FAR AS INDONESIA.

3. THE PRESIDENT'S YOUNGER BROTHER LON NON IS MOVING FOR POLITICAL POWER. HE RESIGNED FROM THE ARMY MARCH 25 AND TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE IS NOW RULING SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL, SINCE PARTY RULES REQUIRE CABINET MEMBERS (SUCH AS PARTY SEC GEN PAN SOTHI AND HIS CENTRAL COMMITTEE MENTOR HANG THUN HAK) TO REVERT TO SIMPLE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY. COMMENT: NEITHER OUR UNDERSTANDING NOR PAST PARTY PRACTICE SQUARE WITH LON NON'S INTERPRETATION. WITH THE MARSHAL GONE, LON NON WILL SOON FIND HIS PRETENSIONS TO POWER SHARPLY CHECKED. (INCIDENTALLY, MME. LON NON DEPARTED IN THE MARSHAL'S PARTY.)

4. RADICAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS JOINED IN THE CHORUS ASKING FOR LON NOL TO LEAVE AND TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT STUDENTS DEMAND AN END TO AMERICAN AID WHICH ONLY BENEFITS THE CORRUPT AND WILL CAUSE MORE SUFFERING. THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT ALSO ASKED FOR FORMATION OF A "PEOPLE'S CONGRESS" TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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KC. THE GKR HAS CLOSED ALL SCHOOLS IN THE CAPITAL AS A SECURITY MEASURE.

COMMENT: STUDENTS IN GENERAL ARE STILL CONVINCED THAT THEY CAN TALK WITH THE OTHER SIDE AND SETTLE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES IF A HANDFUL OF LEADING GKR ELEMENTS LEAVE.

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

5. INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA WITHDREW THEIR EMBASSY STAFFS AND THE JAPANESE PLAN TO LEAVE APRIL 5. THAI DIPLOMATS LEFT APRIL 1 BUT THE THAI MILITARY MISSION WILL STAY WITH A REDUCED STAFF.

6. THE RUSSIANS HAVE ASKED THE GKR TO CLOSE ITS

EMBASSY IN MOSCOW SOVIET MEDIA HAVE CONFIRMED MOSCOW'S
SHIFT TOWARD ENDORSING AN EARLY INSURGENT VICTORY. THE
RUSSIANS, HOWEVER, ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE SHAPE OF A
POST-VICTORY REGIME IN PHNOM PENH.

7. A FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE
FRENCH ESCALATION OF THEIR LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AT
GRNK'S RECEPTION ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ITS MARCH 23
FOUNDING WAS A POLITICAL DECISION HE EMPHASIZED, HOWE-
EVER, THAT REPRESENTATION WAS STILL BELOW POLITICAL,
THAT IS, CABINET LEVEL. COMMENT: HIGHER FRENCH PRO-
TOCOL ATTENTION AND THE RECENT DEPARTURE OF FRENCH DIPLO-
MATS FROM PHNOM PENH SHOW A SHIFT TOWARD THE INSURGENTS.

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P R 011300Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 104

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 5857

GRUNK/FUNK

8. SIHANOUK HAS COMPROMISED THE AMNESTY HE AND
IN-COUNTRY LEADERS PROCLAIMED FOR ALL BUT SEVEN LEADING
REPUBLICAN FIGURES. ON MARCH 26 THE PRINCE SPOKE OF
"OTHER SUPERTRAITORS" WHO WILL BE TRIED FOR WAR CRIMES
AFTER LIBERATION. HE REELED OFF A LIST OF 21 NAMES AMONG
WHOM ARE THE SENATE PRESIDENT, THE MARSHAL'S YOUNGER
BROTHER, THE NEW CABINET AND CONCLUDED WITH THE PHRASE,
"ET CETERA." COMMENT: THE IN-COUNTRY INSURGENTS HAVE
NOT YET FOLLOWED UP WITH A LIST OF WAR CRIMINALS AND
SIHANOUK MAY THEREFORE ONCE AGAIN BE MANEUVERING IN
FRONT OF HIS KC ASSOCIATES. THE KC CAN HARDLY THANK
SIHANOUK FOR MALADROITLY PUTTING INTO INTERNATIONAL QUESTION
THEIR PROCLAIMED AMNESTY AND FOR HANDING AMMUNITION
TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE A KC VICTORY WOULD MEAN HARSH

TREATMENT FOR MANY REPUBLICAN LEADERS AND SUPPORTERS.

9. LON NOL'S REPORTED PLANS TO LEAVE PROMPTED SIHANOUK TO PLEDGE TO AFP THAT THE KC WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE WITH "BANDIT" SENATE PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY EVEN IF THE MARSHAL LEFT.
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10. A MARCH 26 "COMMUNIQUE" FROM THE GRUNK IN-COUNTRY CABINET REAFFIRMED THE DEATH SENTENCE FOR SEVEN PRESENT AND FORMER GKR LEADERS; REJECTED U.S. NEGOTIATION "MANEUVERS;" AND REITERATED THEIR AMNESTY FOR THOSE WHO STOP SERVING THE GKR AND "U.S. IMPERIALISM."

ECONOMIC

11. OPENING RICE STOCKS MARCH 31 AMOUNTED TO 6,122 METRIC TONS REPRESENTING A NINE-DAY SUPPLY BASED ON DAILY DISTRIBUTION OF 545 METRIC TONS TO THE POPULATION AT LARGE AND 100 M/T UNDER PL-480 TITLE II PROGRAM. THE RICE AIRLIFT INCREASED IN THE LAST TWO DAYS TO 20 AND 23 SORTIES, WHICH COMPENSATED FOR INTERRUPTIONS ON MARCH 23 AND 28. THE DAILY AVERAGE SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE AIRLIFT ON FEBRUARY 27, NOW STANDS AT 12.5 SORTIES/505 M/T.

12. THE TITLE II RICE PROGRAM REACHED 38,000 REFUGEE FAMILIES (190,000 PERSONS) OVER THE TWO-WEEK PERIOD ENDING MARCH 22. VARIOUS OTHER PROGRAMS BEGUN OR EXPANDED IN ORDER TO FEED THE NEEDY OF PHNOM PENH, HAVE PROVIDED RICE IN SOME FASHION OR SOUP WITH RICE ADDED TO NEARLY 450,000 OTHER PERSONS. OVER 100,000 PEOPLE RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE MINISTRY OF REFUGEES, THE CITY ADMINISTRATION AND THE U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO IDENTIFY ALL OF THE NEEDY AND DISTRIBUTE FREE RICE ARE GOING FORWARD. AS OF MARCH 26, CENSUS DATA FROM ABOUT 35 PERCENT OF THE CITY'S WARDS HAS BEEN COMPILED.

13. FOUR THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED TONS OF ADDITIONAL TITLE II COMMODITIES HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE. THE MAJOR ITEMS, CORN-SOYA BLEND NUTRITION ADDITIVE AND SOYA FORTIFIED FLOUR, ARE THE PRINCIPAL INGREDIENTS IN SOUP KITCHEN AND NOODLE FEEDING PROGRAMS WHICH ARE PRIMARILY DIRECTED TOWARD THE UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN IN AND AROUND PHNOM PENH. THE FLOUR GOES INTO THE PREPARATION OF BREAD WHICH IS DISTRIBUTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SOUP KITCHENS.

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14. BATTAMBANG PROVINCE HAS A CRITICAL REFUGEE PROBLEM. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF JANUARY, A CONTINUOUS ENEMY BUILD-UP IN ALL DISTRICTS OF THE PROVINCE HAS GENERATED AN ESTIMATED 250,000 REFUGEES. THE BATTAMBANG AIRPORT IS NOT SECURE FOR LANDING AT THE PRESENT TIME, HAMPERING RELIEF EFFORTS BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE MINISTRY OF REFUGEES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. ALTHOUGH MUCH-NEEDED SUPPLIES AND PERSONNEL ARE CUT OFF FROM EASY ACCESS INTO THE AREA, RICE IS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE, AND A RELIEF EFFORT IS BEING MOUNTED BY THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS.

15. THE MINISTRY OF REFUGEES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN GIVEN THE ASSIGNMENT OF MEETING THE IMMEDIATE RELIEF NEEDS OF A GROUP OF MORE THAN 350 WAR WIDOWS AND THEIR CHILDREN FROM NEAK LUONG WHO HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY PLACED ON THE OLYMPIC STADIUM IN THE HEART OF PHNOM PENH. THE SITUATION IN NEAK LUONG REMAINS CRITICAL, WITH 75,000 REFUGEES, RESIDENTS, AND TROOPS BEING COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON A TENUOUS AIRLIFT FOR THEIR SUPPLIES.

16. MILITARY PRESSURE IN THE NORTHERN DIKE AREA NORTH OF THE CAPITAL IS CAUSING LOCALIZED MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES FROM USAID-FINANCED REFUGEE CAMPS ALONG THE DIKE. MOST OF THESE PEOPLE ARE MOVING INTO AN AREA THREE TO SIX KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH. AFTER MOVING THEIR WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO SAFETY, MANY OF THE MEN HAVE RETURNED TO THE CAMPS TO GUARD THEIR HOUSEHOLD POSSESSIONS.

17. PRICES WERE GENERALLY STABLE IN PHNOM PENH RETAIL MARKETS DURING THE PAST WEEK; HOWEVER, SEVERAL COMMODITIES REGISTERED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES. CHARCOAL INCREASED 40 PERCENT, PORK 10 PERCENT, BANANAS 30 PERCENT, AND NUOC MAM 17 PERCENT. VEGETABLES WERE MIXED. SHOWING DECLINES WERE FRESH WATER FISH, DOWN 17 PERCENT; ORANGES 13 PERCENT; AND SOAP POWDER, 5 PERCENT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHARCOAL, SEASONAL FACTORS EXERTED THE MAIN INFLUENCE ON PRICES; THE HIGHER CHARCOAL PRICE REFLECTS INCREASED DEMAND BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT SCARCITY OF KEROSENE. THE BLACK MARKET EXCHANGE RATE CLOSED THE WEEK AT 2,280 RIELS PER DOLLAR, UP FROM 2,200 LAST WEEK. THE PRICE OF GOLD SLIPPED FROM 153 TO 149 DOLLARS PER TROY

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P R 011300Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 105

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 5857

MILITARY

18. THE SITUATION AT BANAM/NEAK LUONG CONTINUED TO DETERIORATE OVER THE PAST WEEK. FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL OCCUPATION OF KOH CHAMROEUN AND KOH TACHOU ISLANDS LAST WEEK, THE KC HAD POSITIONS FROM WHICH TO FIRE DIRECTLY INTO FANK DEFENSES ON THE EAST BANK THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH OF THE RIVERSIDE ENCLAVE. THE ISLANDS ALSO PROVED USEFUL AS STAGING AREAS FROM WHICH TO CROSS THE REMAINING STRETCH OF THE MEKONG FOR DIRECT ASSAULT. COUPLED WITH ATTACKS FROM KC FORCES EAST OF BANAM/NEAK LUONG, THIS DIRECT ASSAULT WAS CARRIED OUT THE NIGHT OF MARCH 28-29, EFFECTIVELY CUTTING BANAM AND NEAK LUONG APART. BOTH POSITIONS ARE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE, BUT ARE HOLDING.

19. SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH, A SERIOUS SITUATION HAS STEADILY DEVELOPED ON THE WEST BANK OF THE BASSAC WHERE KC ATTACKS HAVE FORCED THE DEPLETED SECOND BRIGADE TO GIVE UP FIVE KILOMETERS OF TERRITORY WON AT GREAT COST DURING THE BASSAC OPERATION LAST WET SEASON. THE RETREAT UNCOVERED THE FLANK OF THE BATTALIONS ON A KEY
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ISLAND, AND THE DEFENDERS REPORTEDLY WITHDREW ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 31, A MOVE WHICH IN TURN EXPOSES THE FLANK

OF THE SHAKY 24TH BRIGADE ACROSS THE RIVER ON THE EAST BANK OF THE BASSAC. THIS CHAIN REACTION THREATENS FANK DEFENSES THROUGHOUT THE BASSAC CORRIDOR. SOME KC FORCES HAE MOVED NORTH FROM THE LOWER MEKONG ALREADY, INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE SECOND DIVISION'S AREA. COMMENT: IF NEAK LUONG/BANAM FALL A FAR LARGER NUMBER OF KC TROOPS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MOVE AGAINST THE CAPITAL'S SOUTHEAST DEFENSIVE SECTOR.

20. NORTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL, A KC PENETRATION OF THE NORTHERN DIKE NEAR KAP SROV OPENED AN AVENUE OF APPROACH TO POCHENTONG AIRPORT, BUT THE KC FAILED ONCE AGAIN TO EXPLOIT THEIR ADVANTAGE. BY WEEK'S END, THE 28TH BRIGADE HAD MOVED INTO POSITION TO BLOCK THE PENETRATION. BECAUSE OF THIS EMERGENCY, FORCES WERE DIVERTED FROM THE TUOL LEAP OPERATION AND THE ROUTE 51 CLEARING OPERATION; HENCE, LITTLE PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED IN THOSE AREAS. KC ROCKET ACTIVITY CONTINUED UNABATED, AND ROUNDS FREQUENTLY FELL IN THE KAF AND U.S. AIRLIFT OPERATIONAL AREAS. DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN LIGHT BUT TWO T-28'S, TWO AC-47 GUNSHIPS AND A HELICOPTER IN KAF'S DWINDLING FLEET ARE DOWN FOR REPAIRS BECAUSE OF SHRAPNEL HITS.

21. ELSEWHERE IN THE REPUBLIC, THE SITUATION IN BATTAMBANG ERODED FURTHER, WITH ABF'S REPORTED IN THE CITY AND AT THE AIRFIELD ON MARCH 30. FANK SEEMS UNABLE TO STEM THE KC ADVANCES FROM THE EAST AND SOUTHEAST. ACTION AT KAMPOT CONTINUES LIGHT, BUT PICKED UP AT KOMPONG SPEU WHERE ROUTE 4 IS NOW CUT FROM JUST EAST OF THAT CITY TO THNAL TOTUNG. WITH THE 27TH AND 13TH BRIGADES AT TUOL LEAP, CHANCES OF REOPENING THE ROAD SOON ARE SMALL. KOMPONG CHAM CONTINUED TO BE AN ACTIVE AREA AS MOST OF THE KC PRESSURE CENTERED ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG. FIVE SMALL POSITIONS WERE LOST THERE DURING THE NIGHT OF MARCH 29-30.
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